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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 MADRID 09811

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, ,INT, SS
SUBJECT: SPAIN'S INTERNAL SECURITY: THE BASQUE
CONNECTION

REF: DAO IR 6 889 0253 78, AUGUST 2, 1978 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: ETA TERRORISM, ALWAYS A
SOURCE OF CONCERN, HAS BEEN THE OBJECT OF EVEN MORE
INTENSE GOVT AND MEDIA ATTENTION IN RECENT WEEKS. SUAREZ
MADE IT CLEAR IN HIS JULY 24 CONVERSATION WITH THE
AMBASSADOR THAT HE CONSIDERED TERRORISM THE MOST SERIOUS
THREAT TO SPANISH DEMOCRACY (MADRID 8589), AND THIS CON-
CERN ALSO WAS FLAGGED BY FIRST VICE PRESIDENT GUTIERREZ
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MELLADO BEEORE AND DURING HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE US. THE
GOVT'S DISQUIET DERIVES FROM THE PERSISTENCE OF ETA
TERRORISM IN SPITE OF ITS BEST EFFORTS TO ROOT IT OUT
(INDEED, THIS IS THE ONE PROBLEM THAT HAS PROVED IMPER-
VIOUS TO SUAREZ' POLITICAL TALENTS, THE GOVT'S BEST EFFORTS
AND THE LOGIC OF CONSENSUS POLITICS). BUT ITS UNEASE
ALSO RESULTS DIRECTLY FROM A CALCULATED ESCALATION OF

BASQUE TERRORIST ASSAULTS AIMED PRIMARILY AT DERAILING ANY GOVT-BASQUE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTITUTION'S AUTONOMY PROVISIONS, WHICH COULD BE THE FOUNDATION FOR AN EVENTUAL POLITICAL SOLUTION OF THE BASQUE PROBLEM. THIS INTENSIFICATION OF ETA VIOLENCE, WHICH HAS INCLUDED TARGETING THE MILITARY, HAS SPARKED UNFOCUSED DISQUIET WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES AND HAS UNDERMINED THE DISCIPLINE AND MORALE OF PUBLIC ORDER FORCES IN THE BASQUE REGION.

2. BUT THE GOVT HAS RESPONDED FIRMLY THAT IT WILL NOT BE PROVOKED INTO OVERREACTING AND THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF BASQUE TERRORISM, WHILE ALSO TAKING APPROPRIATE "TECHNICAL" PUBLIC ORDER STEPS. THE GOVT CLEARLY VIEWS ANY BROAD-GAUGED USE OF THE MILITARY IN A PUBLIC ORDER ROLE (WHICH IT IS NEITHER TRAINED NOR EQUIPPED FOR) AS AN ADMISSION OF FAILURE, AND AS A DECISION WITH POTENTIALLY FATEFUL IMPLICATIONS THAT WOULD TRANSCEND THE BASQUE REGION. WE BELIEVE MILITARY LEADERS ARE EQUALLY OPPOSED TO ANY SUCH USE OF THE ARMED FORCES AND SHARE THE GOVT'S VIEW THAT SUCH AN INDISCRIMINATELY ANTI-BASQUE STEP IS JUST WHAT ETA IS HOPING FOR.

3. ANY SOLUTION TO BASQUE TERRORISM REMAINS A LONG WAY OFF AND IT WILL REQUIRE THAT THE GOVT CONTINUE TO WALK THE DIFFICULT LINE BETWEEN PERCEIVED WEAKNESS AND CHARGES OF UNDUE RIGIDITY. MOST IMPORTANT, THE GOVT ENJOYS ALMOST CONFIDENTIAL

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UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FROM THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES ON THIS ISSUE, AND EVEN THE BASQUE PNV IS GRADUALLY TAKING A LESS AMBIGUOUS ANTI-ETA STANCE. THE SHARED RECOGNITION BY ALL OF THESE PARTIES THAT SPANISH DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE CONSOLIDATED WITHOUT BASQUE STABILITY ENSURES A UNITY OF COMMITMENT AND PURPOSE THAT IS A FIRM POLITICAL FOUNDATION FOR THIS DIFFICULT ENTERPRISE. BUILDING ON THIS FOUNDATION THE GOVT WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE ITS TWO-TRACK STRATEGY OF SECURING PNV ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION/AUTONOMY STATUTE AND IMPROVING THE LOT AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES, IN AN ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE ETA FROM PUBLIC SUPPORT IN THE BASQUE REGION AND THEN TO SMASH THAT ORGANIZATION.

4. BUT WITH THE POLICE'S MORALE/DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD, AND SENATE CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION MOVING TOWARD A PROBABLE LATE-SEPTEMBER VOTE, ETA IS CERTAIN TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE. THIS WILL TEST THE GOVT'S NERVE, PATIENCE AND VISION, AND QUITE POSSIBLY WILL REDUCE ITS FLEXIBILITY BY INCREASING ITS VULNERABILITY TO PRESSURE GENERATED BY THE COMBINATION OF SAGGING POLICE DISCIPLINE, MILITARY CONCERNS, AND CON-

SERVATIVE CIVILIAN JEREMIADS. CONSEQUENTLY, SUAREZ IS
CONFRONTED NOT ONLY WITH A SERIOUS AND PRESSING LONG-TERM
INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM, BUT ALSO BY A SERIES OF SHORT-
TERM OBSTACLES WHICH COULD DELAY OR EVEN DERAIL THE GOVT'S
BEST EFFORTS TO SOLVE IT. MOST HERE CONSIDER THE BASQUE
PROBLEM AND THE TERRORISM IT HAS BRED TO BE THE STIFFEST
CHALLENGE THIS OR ANY OTHER GOVT WILL FACE, AND A MORE
DIFFICULT ONE THAN ANY SURMOUNTED THUS FAR IN THE SPANISH
TRANSITION. SOME BELIEVE IT DEFIES SOLUTION, AND THAT IT
WILL REMAIN A FESTERING SORE ON SPANISH DEMOCRACY THAT
WILL EVENTUALLY INFECT THE ENTIRE BODY POLITIC. WHILE

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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

THIS MAY BE AN UNNECESSARILY BLEAK VIEW OF THE BASQUE
SITUATION, EVEN THE MOST OPTIMISTIC PROGNOSIS FOR EVENTUAL
SUCCESS CAN ONLY INVOLVE A PROTRACTED BATTLE THAT WILL
QUITE LIKELY DEMAND FROM SPAIN'S POLITICAL LEADERS AND
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EVEN MORE POLITICAL ABILITY,
OVERALL COMPETENCE AND GOOD WILL THAN THEY HAVE THUS
FAR HAD TO MUSTER. END SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

5. THE INTERNAL SECURITY DICHOTOMY. THE INTERNAL

SECURITY SITUATION IN SPAIN IS BEST DESCRIBED AND UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF ITS DUALITY, A DUALITY SO FUNDAMENTAL THAT ANY TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT IS IN EFFECT A DISCOURSE ON TWO SEPARATE--BUT LINKED--REALITIES.

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--ON THE ONE HAND, SPAIN OUTSIDE THE BASQUE REGION AND NAVARRE IS RELATIVELY PEACEFUL AND UNTROUBLED. WHILE THERE ARE OBVIOUS EXCEPTIONS -- SPORADIC PRO-INDEPENDENCE VIOLENCE IN THE CANARIES; PERIODIC ACTS OF TERRORISM IN MAJOR URBAN AREAS LIKE BARCELONA AND, PARTICULARLY, MADRID (USUALLY AT CRUCIAL JUNCTURES IN THE TRANSITION AND CLAIMED BY THE ULTRA-LEFT GRAPO OR FRAP) -- THE ATMOSPHERE IS ONE OF RELATIVE SECURITY. THE MAN IN THE STREET DOES NOT FEEL THREATENED BY POLITICAL TURMOIL OR VIOLENCE (ALTHOUGH HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEVEL OF COMMON CRIME). NOR DO HE AND THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES CONSIDER THEMSELVES IN A STATE OF CONFLICT. THIS ATMOSPHERE IS TINGED, OF COURSE, WITH A RELUCTANT RESIGNATION TO ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS PART OF THE LEGACY OF FRANCOISM AND OF THE PRICE FOR DEMOCRATIZATION, AS WELL AS WITH THE UNDERSTANDABLE DISCOMFORT OF A POPULATION ACCUSTOMED TO THE SECURITY PROVIDED BY FRANCO'S AUTHORITARIANISM, BUT NOW FACED WITH THE INEVITABLE UNCERTAINTIES OF A TRANSFORMED SPAIN. THESE PERIODIC ACTS OF VIOLENCE HAVE BEEN THE EXCEPTION, NOT THE RULE. SPAIN'S POLITICAL LEADERS AND THE POPULACE GENERALLY HAVE DEMONSTRATED GREAT PATIENCE AND FOREBEARANCE IN DEALING WITH THEM, AND THE GOVT HAS ENJOYED SOME SUCCESS IN PENETRATING AND APPREHENDING IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF GRAPO AND FRAP. THIS VIOLENCE, AS A RESULT, HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN BREAKING OR DEFLECTING THE SPANISH TRANSITION. ON THE CONTRARY, IT HAS TENDED MORE TO UNIFY THAN TO DIVIDE, AND IN MOST CASES HAS ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE TRANSITION'S MOMENTUM.

-- ON THE OTHER HAND, THE THREE BASQUE PROVINCES, ESPECIALLY VIZCAYA AND GUIPUZCOA, AND THE NEIGHBORING PROVINCE OF NAVARRE CONTINUE TO BE THE SCENE OF A SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE BY THE BASQUE TERRORIST ETA. ETA'S

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DEPRADATIONS, COMBINED WITH THE POLICE HEAVY-HANDEDNESS AND OVERREACTION WHICH THEY HAVE FOSTERED, HAVE LEFT A HEAVY TOLL -- DEATHS AND INJURIES (REFTEL), POLITICAL POLARIZATION, CAPITAL FLIGHT FROM THE REGION, DETERIORATION

OF POLICE DISCIPLINE AND MORALE, GENERALIZED UNCERTAINTY, FREQUENT TENSION, AND WIDESPREAD CONCERN -- WHICH HAS BROUGHT MANY TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBLE "ULSTERIZATION" OF THE BASQUE REGION, A DEVELOPMENT THAT MANY BELIEVE SPANISH DEMOCRACY COULD NOT SURVIVE. IN ADDITION TO THE QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY AND IN THE REST OF SPAIN, TWO OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BASQUE PHENOMENON ARE OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE: ITS DEMONSTRATED POTENTIAL FOR PRECIPITATING, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, MASSIVE CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE BASQUE POPULACE; AND ITS CAPACITY TO SPILL OVER TO OTHER REGIONS, BOTH IN TERMS OF CYCLES OF VIOLENCE GROWING OUT OF SYMPATHY DEMONSTRATIONS (WHICH, HOWEVER, WERE NOTABLY ABSENT IN RESPONSE TO THE POST-PAMPLONA BASQUE VIOLENCE IN JULY), AND IN THE FORM OF ACTUAL FORAYS OUT OF THE REGION BY ETA TERRORIST SQUADS THEMSELVES, AS IN THE RECENT ASSASSINATION IN MADRID OF TWO SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS (BE (BELOW). BASQUE TERRORISM, THEN, THOUGH CONCENTRATED IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES, IS NOT CONFINED TO THEM, AND ITS EFFECTS CAN BE FELT THROUGHOUT SPAIN.

6. ETA'S CURRENT OFFENSIVE. ALWAYS A SOURCE OF CONCERN, BASQUE TERRORISM HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF EVEN MORE INTENSE GOVT AND MEDIA ATTENTION IN RECENT WEEKS, BECAUSE OF A CALCULATED ESCALATION OF ETA ASSAULTS, BOTH IN NUMBER AND CHOICE OF TARGETS. THIS INTENSIFICATION OF ETA VIOLENCE APPEARS TO DERIVE FROM A NUMBER OF FACTORS, INCLUDING THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION'S OWN INTERNAL TURMOIL, WHICH HAS PRODUCED REPEATED SPLINTERING, AND THE VARIOUS SPLINTERS' RECOGNITION THAT THE GOVT HAS BEEN PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN

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ADDRESSING THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS UNDERLYING BASQUE ALIENATION FROM MADRID. SPECIFICALLY, THIS MOST RECENT VIOLENCE IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT TORPEDOING ANY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVT AND MAINSTREAM BASQUES (ESSENTIALLY THE PNV) ON THE CONSTITUTION'S AUTONOMY PROVISIONS (MADRID 9217 AND PREVIOUS). IT IS GENERALLY AGREED HERE THAT ANY SUCH ACCORD COULD WELL RESULT IN A MARKED DIMINUTION OF THE POPULAR BASQUE SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT WHICH SUSTAINED ETA DURING THE FRANCO YEARS AND SINCE HIS DEATH, AND ON WHICH THE BASQUE TERRORISTS CONTINUE TO DEPEND.

7. TAKING ON THE ARMED FORCES. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF THIS CAMPAIGN IS ETA'S FRONTAL ASSAULT ON MILITARY LEADERS AND SENSIBILITIES. (HERETOFORE ETA HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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AVOIDED PROVOKING THE MILITARY DIRECTLY, ALTHOUGH IT HAD IN THE PAST CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTACKS ON ARMY OFFICERS CARRYING OUT PUBLIC ORDER FUNCTIONS.) THREE RECENT EPISODES, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE SPARKED ANXIETY IN MILITARY CIRCLES:

- ON JUNE 18 AN ETA GROUP FORCIBLY ENTERED THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE MILITARY GOVERNOR OF GUIPUZCOA, IN SAN SEBASTIAN. THE ASSAULT WAS FRUSTRATED WHEN A FIREARM DISCHARGED ACCIDENTALLY, AND NO ONE WAS INJURED. ETA'S OBJECTIVES APPEAR TO HAVE INCLUDED THE SYMBOLIC OCCUPATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS AND THE THEFT OF ARMS. BUT IT ALSO WAS SPECULATED THAT THE GROUP WAS ATTEMPTING TO KIDNAP THE MILITARY GOVERNOR, WHOSE RESIDENCE IS IN THE HEAD-QUARTERS BUILDING.

-- ON JULY 11, DURING THE CHAIN OF VIOLENCE THAT FOLLOWED THE SHOOTING DEATH OF A DEMONSTRATOR IN PAMPLONA BASQUE EXTREMISTS DYNAMITED THE RAIL LINES TO FRANCE (JUNING THTHOUGH A SAN SEBASTIAN SUBURB (MADRID 7290). THIS TEMPORARY INTERRUPTION OF AN IMPORTANT LINE OF COMMUNICATION, AND ONE WHICH WOULD BE EMPLOYED BY THE MILITARY IN TTME OF EMERGENCY, REPORTEDLY BROUGHT A

NUMBER OF ARMED FORCES LEADERS UP SHORT.

-- ON JULY 21, THE LAST DAY OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION, A TERRORIST SQUAD, NOW BELIEVED TO HAVE BELONGED TO ETA, ASSASSINATED GENERAL SANCHEZ-RAMOS AND LT. COL. PEREZ RODRIGUEZ IN MADRID (MADRID 8388).

8. IMPACT ON THE POLICE. MILITARY CONCERNS ALSO HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED BY EVIDENCE OF SAGGING MORALE AND DISCONFIDENTIAL

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CIPLINE ON THE PART OF PUBLIC ORDER FORCES STATIONED IN THE BASQUE REGION, AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PERSISTENCE OF CURRENT CONDITIONS COULD BRING THE POLICE EVENTUALLY TO THE POINT WHERE THEY COULD NOT FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY, THEREBY NECESSITATING THE EMPLOYMENT OF MILITARY UNITS TO REPLACE OR REINFORCE THEM. VANDALISM AND LOOTING BY MEMBERS OF AN ARMED POLICE UNIT IN RENTERIA (MADRID 8017) CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THE DANGERS TO DISCIPLINE POSED BY SERVICE UNDER PRESSURE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY. ON AUGUST 1 A SPOKESMAN FOR THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE SET OUT THE PROBLEM IN STARK TERMS, WHEN HE SAID DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT A MAJORITY OF THE ARMED POLICE STATIONED IN THE BASQUE REGION WANTED TO LEAVE, BECAUSE OF THE "INTOLERABLE" CIRCUMSTANCES AND LIVING CONDITIONS, INCLUDING OSTRACISM, TO WHICH THEY AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE SUBJECTED. "WE DO NOT WANT TO CONTINUE TO BE SACRIFICIAL LAMBS," HE CONCLUDED.

9. THE GOVT RESPONDS. BUT THE GOVT SEEMS TO HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND PLACED THESE WARNING SIGNS ACCURATELY IN PERSPECTIVE.

-- THE POLICE DISCIPLINE/MORALE PROBLEMS CONFIRM ONCE AGAIN THAT THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY CANNOT FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY IN A DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT SO LONG AS THEY ARE TREATED AS AN OCCUPYING ARMY BY A SUBSTANTIAL SECTOR OF THE BASQUE POPULATION AND AS TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY BY ETA.

--AS FOR THE CONCERNS OF THE MILITARY, THEY NOT ONLY APPEAR INCHOATE, BUT ALSO TO BE EXPRESSIONS OF DISQUIET THAT THE ARMED FORCES MIGHT BE CALLED ON BY THE GOVT TO PERFORM A BROAD-GAUGED PUBLIC ORDER ROLE IN THE BASQUE REGION, RATHER THAN ANY MANIFESTATION OF THE DESIRE TO DO SO, OR THE INTENTION TO ACT AGAINST THE CONSTITUTIONAL
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ORDER.

INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA STATED AUGUST 11 THAT THE GOVT WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO BASQUE TERRORISM, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MOVING AHEAD WITH MORE TECHNICAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE POLICE. (OBVIOUSLY INCLUDED HERE WAS THE RECENTLY

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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

ACCOMP-

LISHED SHUFFLE OF TOP-LEVEL NATIONAL POLICE (DGS)

OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE NAMING OF A NEW BILBAO POLICE

CHIEF.) HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE HARDSHIPS INVOLVED IN SERVICE

IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT DISCIPLINE

WOULD BE ENFORCED. UCD PARTY LEADER RAFAEL ARIAS SALGADO

EXPANDED ON MARTIN VILLA'S STATEMENT IN AN AUG. 12 PRESS

INTERVIEW, EMPHASIZING THAT THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE SOLU-

TION TO BASQUE TERRORISM, BECAUSE IT DEPENDS ON "THE

ASSIMILATION OF THE CONSTITUTION BY THE BASQUE COUNTRY...,"
STRENGTHENING THE STATE'S DEFENSE MACHINERY AND THE
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISOLATION OF THE BASQUE TERRORISTS.
THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR: THE GOVT WILL ATTEMPT TO DRAIN
ETA'S RESERVOIR OF SYMPATHY IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY, IN
ORDER TO INCREASE THE POLICE'S EFFECTIVENESS IN DEALING
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WITH ETA TERRORISM AND TO MINIMIZE THE POLITICAL COSTS
OF THE FORCE THAT INEVITABLY WILL HAVE TO BE APPLIED IF ETA
IS TO BE ELIMINATED.

10. THE GOVT'S BASIC STRATEGY. IN DEALING WITH BASQUE
TERRORISM THEN, THE GOVT CLEARLY CONTINUES TO OPERATE,
CORRECTLY IN OUR VIEW, ON THE PREMISE THAT:

--THE ONLY SOLUTION IS A LONG-TERM POLITICAL SOLUTION
BASED ON AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTITUTION'S AUTONOMY PROVIS-
IONS, AND ON THE AUTONOMY STATUTE FOR THE BASQUE PROVINCES
THAT WILL GROW OUT OF THEM. AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS
LONG-TERM SOLUTION WILL HAVE TO CONSIST OF THE DEVOLUTION
OF SUBSTANTIAL POWER OVER PUBLIC ORDER FORCES IN THE
REGION, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THESE FORCES INTO A
LARGELY ETHNICALLY BASQUE POLICE. (DEVOLUTION AND ETHNIC
BASQUE PARTICIPATION ARE, HOWEVER, COMPLEX ISSUES, ABOUT
WHICH OPINION CLEARLY REMAINS DIVIDED, EVEN WITHIN THE
GOVT ITSELF.)

--THE ARMED POLICE AND CIVIL GUARD IN THE REGION WILL
HAVE TO DO THE BEST THEY CAN TO PERFORM WHAT IS ESSEN-
TIAL A HOLDING ACTION UNTIL THE POLITICAL SOLUTION
TO THE PROBLEM BEGINS TO TAKE HOLD. THE GOVT WILL HELP AS
IT CAN, INCLUDING THROUGH BETTER ORGANIZATION, EQUIPMENT
AND TRAINING AND A MORE EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE WITH BASQUE
POLITICAL LEADERS.

--THE GENERALIZED USE OF THE MILITARY IN THE BASQUE
REGION WOULD BE AN ADMISSION OF FAILURE, RATHER THAN A
STEP TOWARD RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. THE ARMED FORCES
ARE NEITHER TRAINED NOR EQUIPPED TO PERFORM SUCH A ROLE,
AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, BOTH IN THE REGION AND
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NATIONALLY, WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXAGGERATE. MOREOVER,
WE BELIEVE BOTH GOVT AND MILITARY LEADERS FULLY REALIZE
THAT SUCH A MILITARY INTERVENTION, WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY

TURN INTO AN INDISCRIMINATELY ANTI-BASQUE OPERATION
REGARDLESS OF THE ORIGINAL INTENT, IS PRECISELY THE SORT
OF REACTION ETA IS SEEKING.

11. A GLIMMER OF LIGHT, BUT A VERY LONG TUNNEL. OF
COURSE, CORRECTLY IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AND PLOTTING A
SENSIBLE COURSE FOR DEALING WITH IT DO NOT IN THEMSELVES
GUARANTEE ITS SOLUTION. SUAREZ MADE IT CLEAR IN HIS
JULY 24 CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE CONSID-
ERED TERRORISM THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO SPANISH DEMO-
CRACY (MADRID 8589), AND THIS CONCERN ALSO WAS FLAGGED
BY FIRST VICE PRESIDENT GUTIERREZ MELLADO BEFORE AND DURING
HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE US. THE GOVT'S DISQUIET DERIVES
FROM THE PERSISTENCE OF ETA TERRORISM IN SPITE OF ITS BEST
EFFORTS TO ROOT IT OUT (INDEED, THIS IS THE ONE PROBLEM
THAT HAS PROVED IMPERVIOUS TO SUAREZ' POLITICAL TALENTS,

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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

THE GOVT'S BEST EFFORTS AND THE LOGIC OF CONSENSUS
POLITICS). THIS UNEASE ALSO RESULTS FROM THE KNOWLEDGE
THAT SPAIN IS CONDEMNED TO LIVE WITH THE PHENOMENON OF

BASQUE TERRORISM FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THE TERRORISM-INFLUENCED DETERIORATION OF THE BASQUE ECONOMY, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BROUGHT HIGHER LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT, PARTICULARLY AMONG BASQUE YOUTH, THEREBY MAKING ETA'S TRADITIONAL RECRUITING GROUND-RADICALIZED YOUNG BASQUES--AN EVEN MORE FERTILE FIELD. MOREOVER, SUAREZ AND OTHER GOVT OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY EMPHASIZED TO US ETA'S ALLEGED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, INCLUDING TRAINING AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM ALGERIA, LIBYA, THE IRA, AND PERHAPS MONEY FROM ETHNIC BASQUES IN THE UNITED STATES. (WHILE THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE SUBSTANCE IN THESE CHARGES
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AS FAR AS TRAINING IN TERRORIST TECHNIQUES FROM SOME OF SPAIN'S RADICAL ARAB NEIGHBORS IS CONCERNED, THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION'S BANK ROBBERIES AND EXTORTIONS("IMPUESTOS REVOLUCIONARIOS,")APPEAR MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO MEET ETA'S COMPARATIVELY LIMITED LOGISTIC AND OTHER NEEDS.

12. THE GOVT WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE TO WALK THE DIFFICULT LINE BETWEEN PERCEIVED WEAKNESS AND CHARGES OF UNDUE RIGIDITY, AND IT WILL HAVE TO KEEP A FIRM GRIP ON ITS NERVE AND PATIENCE TO DO SO. IT KNOWS FULL WELL THAT THERE IS NO SHORT-TERM DEFENSE AGAINST ETA TERRORISM, AND THAT AN ASSASSINATION SQUAD COULD STRIKE AGAINST THE POLICE, THE MILITARY OR A GOVT LEADER AT ALMOST ANY TIME (IN FACT, THERE CURRENTLY ARE RUMORS IN THE PRESS THAT AN ETA ASSASSINATION SQUAD IS IN MADRID AND THAT MILITARY LEADERS MAY BE THE TARGETED VICTIMS). PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THE GOVT ENJOYS ALMOST UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FROM THE MAJOR NATIONAL PARTIES ON THIS ISSUE, (FRAGA'S AP, WHICH FREQUENTLY BLASTS SUAREZ FOR NOT GOVERNING WITH SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY, IS THE ONLY PERIODIC EXCEPTION), AND THE TWO REGIONAL PARTIES, THE CATALAN CDC AND BASQUE PNV, ALSO ARE ON BOARD, WITH THE PNV GRADUALLY TAKING A LESS AMBIGUOUS ANTI-ETA STANCE. THE SHARED RECOGNITION BY ALL OF THESE PARTIES THAT SPANISH DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE CONSOLIDATED WITHOUT BASQUE STABILITY ENSURES A UNITY OF COMMITMENT AND PURPOSE THAT CONSTITUTES A FIRM POLITICAL FOUNDATION FOR THIS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ENTERPRISE. BUILDING ON THIS FOUNDATION, THE GOVT WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE ITS TWO-TRACK STRATEGY OF SECURING PNV ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION/AUTONOMY STATUTE AND IMPROVING THE LOT AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES IN THE BASQUE REGION.

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13. IF THE GOVT IS SUCCESSFUL ON BOTH THE CONSTITUTION/
AUTONOMY STATUTE AND PUBLIC ORDER FRONTS, IT WILL HAVE
TAKEN AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD ISOLATING ETA AND ITS HARD-
CORE SUPPORTERS FROM THE BASQUE POPULACE GENERALLY, AND
HENCE TOWARD AN EVENTUAL LONG-TERM RESOLUTION OF THE
PROBLEM OF BASQUE TERRORISM. BUT WITH THE POLICE'S
MORALE/DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD,
AND SENATE CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION MOVING
TOWARD A PROBABLE LATE-SEPTEMBER VOTE, ETA IS CERTAIN TO
KEEP UP THE PRESSURE. THIS WILL TEST THE GOVT'S NERVE,
PATIENCE AND VISION, AND QUITE POSSIBLY WILL REDUCE ITS
FLEXIBILITY BY INCREASING ITS VULNERABILITY TO PRESSURES
GENERATED BY THE COMBINATION OF SAGGING POLICE DISCIPLINE,
MILITARY CONCERNS, AND CONSERVATIVE CIVILIAN JEREMIADS.
CONSEQUENTLY, SUAREZ IS CONFRONTED NOT ONLY WITH A
SERIOUS AND PRESSING LONG-TERM INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM,
BUT ALSO BY A SERIES OF SHORT-TERM OBSTACLES WHICH COULD
DELAY OR EVEN DERAIL THE GOVT'S BEST EFFORTS TO SOLVE IT.
MOST HERE CONSIDER THE BASQUE PROBLEM AND THE TERRORISM
IT HAS BRED TO BE THE STIFFEST CHALLENGE THIS OR ANY
OTHER GOVT WILL FACE, AND A MORE DIFFICULT ONE THAN ANY
SURMOUNTED THUS FAR IN THE SPANISH TRANSITION. SOME
BELIEVE IT DEFIES SOLUTION, AND THAT IT WILL REMAIN A
FESTERING SORE ON SPANISH DEMOCRACY THAT WILL EVENTUALLY
INFECT THE ENTIRE BODY POLITIC. THIS MAY WELL BE AN
UNNECESSARILY BLEAK VIEW OF THE BASQUE SITUATION, BUT
EVEN THE MOST OPTIMISTIC PROGNOSIS FOR EVENTUAL SUCCESS
CAN ONLY INVOLVE A PROTRACTED BATTLE THAT WILL QUITE
LIKELY DEMAND FROM SPAIN'S POLITICAL LEADERS AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION EVEN MORE POLITICAL ABILITY AND GOOD WILL
THAN THEY HAVE THUS FAR HAD TO MUSTER. TODMAN

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